



Residents on the Move: Transportation and Neighborhood Networks Centers

Transportation programs have increased the effectiveness of the following Neighborhood Networks centers:

A Neighborhood Networks center in Omaha has a partnership with a private van service to provide free pick-up and drop-off service for participants in the center's drug elimination program. The service also allows children in the program to go on field trips to local attractions. The partnership provides residents with a valuable service and offers the van service a tax write-off incentive.

A Neighborhood Networks center in Atlanta uses its eight-passenger van to provide transportation to participants in the center's many programs. The van takes senior citizens to malls and parks for walking club outings. Children go on frequent field trips to parks, swimming pools and sporting events after school and during the summer. During off-hours, staff use the van to run center errands. The center also gives free bus tokens to job training participants to go to job interviews. The tokens are paid for by a grant from the Georgia Department of Labor.

What recent trends make transportation such an important issue for Neighborhood Networks centers?

For those without cars, getting around - especially getting to work every day - can be difficult. Recent trends in job growth and transportation availability make the transition from joblessness to employment a challenge.

- **Job growth moves to suburbs.** Much new job growth - especially entry-level positions - occurs in the suburbs, not within central cities where public transportation is more concentrated. Suburban public transportation tends to be limited or inconvenient.
- **Rural transit is rare.** Public transportation in rural areas is often non-existent — 40 percent of rural communities have no public transportation¹.
- **Odd working hours.** Many entry-level jobs now available to workers require odd working hours: early morning hours, mid-day and night shifts. Conventional public transportation is often limited or non-existent at these hours.

- **Complex family schedules.** All families have complex schedules. Working parents, for example, must take children to child care, go shopping and run errands. Without a car, these trips are more complicated and time-consuming. Sometimes, making these simple trips on public transportation can involve several hours and two or three transfers.

Neighborhood Networks Facts...

WHAT: Neighborhood Networks is a community-based initiative launched by HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing in September 1995 that encourages the development of resource and computer learning centers in HUD-assisted and/or -insured housing.

- More than 620 centers in operation*
- Thousands of business, community and government partners
- More than 744 properties with centers in planning*

WHO: Serves HUD-assisted and/or -insured housing residents, owners, managers, partners and communities.

*as of 08/00

¹Source: Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) Study, 1994.

What transportation challenges do Neighborhood Networks centers face?

While Neighborhood Networks centers offer place-based economic and learning opportunities, residents need convenient access to their surrounding communities. The long-term employment success of residents depends upon having regular and dependable transportation in order to keep the jobs for which they are working hard to prepare. Residents also need convenient transportation to shopping, medical care and schools.

What can centers and partners do to meet transportation needs?

Centers and partners can meet transportation needs by forming creative partnerships and seeking funding from some obvious and not-so-obvious sources. Potential transportation partners come in all shapes and sizes. Many kinds of partners can contribute to developing solutions:

- Government partners at the local, regional, state or federal level
- Public Housing Authorities

- Local transit authorities
- Businesses
- Human service agencies
- School districts
- Churches
- Banks
- Car dealers

For more information, contact:

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The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), a nonprofit advocacy and research organization based in Washington, DC, is a good resource for centers that want to explore the issue of transportation and welfare-to-work. CTAA provides information about funding sources nationwide, technical assistance and best practice models. The center provides this information through a website (www.ctaa.org) and a toll-free telephone number (1-800-527-8279).